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OPINION • COMMUNITY VOICE

Changing Autism 'Awareness' to 'Acceptance': How The WHO Made It Easier to Hide Discrimination Against Children, Adults With Most Severe Symptoms

We're told to accept everything today, why not without thought. But acceptance is a cop-out designed to cover up the myriad ways in which those children and adults diagnosed with full-blown autism are routinely discriminated against.

BY AGE OF AUTISM

In 2024, World Autism Awareness Day was changed to World Autism Acceptance Day.

The verbiage of the president's proclamation has also changed slightly from 2023, with an emphasis on diversity and equity.

Google
white house autism day
States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 2, 2024, as World Autism Acceptance Day
The White House Logo
A Proclamation on World Autism Acceptance Day, 2024
The White House Logo
A Proclamation on World Autism Acceptance Day, 2023

The verbiage is shiny and happy and a warm embrace that appears wonderful to the untrained eye. That isn't it. Autistic people aren't discriminated against because they are autistic. Autism is not race, creed, color or sexual or gender preference.

Here's just one example of discrimination:

Autistic people don't get medical care because they can not express their symptoms and doctors don't take the time to learn.

My daughters NEVER had a pediatric eye exam at their "well" visits because they couldn't look into the viewer and say the shape. No pediatric office ever cared. They told me to go to an eye doctor. That's discrimination.

Autistic people don't get medical care because insurance won't pay thousands for the in-hospital anesthesiologist needed for a routine dental cleaning or a gyn visit. That's discrimination.

Autistic people don't get accepted to special needs day programs and work programs that others with disabilities cruise into with open arms because they have behaviors and the staff doesn't want to work with them.

My own daughter was excommunicated from a local day program *run by a man accepted in a wheelchair* because her behaviors (minor by most standards) were untenable. That's discrimination.

The presidential proclamations EXCLUDE people with DSM-V full autism. The "Neurodiversity" community has HIJACKED the message. We do not forget this.

Acceptance is BASELINE humanity. We're told to accept everything today — willy-nilly without thought. Acceptance is a COP OUT.

The 2024 and 2023 Proclamations are below.

A Proclamation on World Autism Acceptance Day, 2024

America was founded on the idea that all people are created equal and deserve to be treated equally throughout their lives. Today, we champion the equal rights and dignity of the millions of Americans on the autism spectrum, and we celebrate the immense contributions of all neurodiverse people, whose perspectives and experiences make America a richer Nation.

Some 5.4 million American adults and 1 in 36 children have been diagnosed with autism. Their experiences with the condition vary widely, but their talents and potential are too often misunderstood or overlooked. Autistic people routinely face unnecessary obstacles to securing employment and health care and children face bullying and barriers to education. We can work to end these disparities and ensure they have an equal opportunity to reach their full potential. We must ensure that people with autism and those who support them have the resources and tools they need to communicate, grow, work, and achieve greater independence.

Early diagnosis can make a big difference, which is why my Administration is funding groundbreaking research to boost access to diagnoses and services that can help autistic people of all ages thrive. The Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services are also working to ensure that young children with disabilities, including autism, have access to high-quality, inclusive early childhood programs so that they can thrive as well as helping schools leverage Medicaid funds to deliver critical health care services. Further, my Administration released guidance on how schools can obtain, use, and support assistive technology devices that are essential to the success of some people with disabilities. Meanwhile, the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights would aid discriminatory discipline for autistic students, whose needs can be misunderstood, while also working to get students with autism and their teachers the resources they need to thrive. We are working to boost understanding among community members who care for young people with autism safe — I was proud to sign a reauthorization of Kevin and Avonte's Law, expanding training for first responders and caregivers.

My Administration is also making it easier for all Americans to get the health care they need. We protected and strengthened the Affordable Care Act and Medicaid, expanding health care coverage to millions of Americans. At the same time, we lowered health insurance premiums by $800 per year for millions of Americans. Through the American Rescue Plan, we provided $37 billion to make it easier for people with disabilities, including autism, to receive the services they need at home and stay active in their communities. My Budget requests another $150 billion over the next decade to further expand and improve these life-changing services.

We owe everyone in this country a fair shot at the American Dream, so we are also working to increase job opportunities for autistic and other historically marginalized Americans who have been shut out for too long. My Administration is providing State and local governments, private companies, and nonprofits with Federal funding to hire more Americans with disabilities, including those with autism. I signed an Executive Order to make the Federal workforce more inclusive, and I eliminated the unjust use of sub-minimum wages for people with disabilities by Federal contractors, working to ensure every American has equal protection under the law.

Globally, we are advancing disability rights as part of our work to promote democracy, prosperity, and inclusion. We are prioritizing disability rights in policy discussions with other nations, and we are working through the United States Agency for International Development and as co-chair of the Global Action on Disability Network to fund for the dignity and equal rights of people with disabilities worldwide.

Diversity in all its forms is one of America's greatest strengths. Today, we recommit to making the promise of America real for every American on the autism spectrum, upholding our most basic values of decency, fairness, and respect.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOSEPH R. BIDEN JR., President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 2, 2024, as World Autism Acceptance Day. I call upon all Americans to learn more about autism to improve early diagnosis, to learn more about the experiences of autistic people from autistic people, and to build more welcoming and inclusive communities to support people with autism.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this first day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand twenty-four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and forty-eighth.

JOSEPH R. BIDEN JR.

2023 verbiage:

A Proclamation on World Autism Awareness Day, 2023

There is no one way to be autistic — each individual with autism experiences it differently — but together, autistic people make industries, communities, and our Nation stronger. Today, we celebrate the achievements of neurodiverse people everywhere and champion the equal rights and dignity of all those living on the autism spectrum.

Here in the United States, more than 5.4 million adults are autistic, and 1 in every 44 children has been diagnosed with autism. Yet this developmental disability is still misunderstood. Autistic people continue to face obstacles when seeking employment, health care, education, and housing, and the immense contributions of people with autism are often overlooked. We need to do our fellow Americans to address the disparities they face and to support autistic people with tools that facilitate clearer communication, increased productivity, and greater independence.

That is why my Administration is funding cutting-edge research to enable earlier autism diagnoses and to develop more resources to help neurodiverse people of all ages thrive. Recognizing that Autism Spectrum Disorder is categorized as a disability, my American Rescue Plan provided $25 billion to States to make it easier for people with disabilities, including autism, to receive care at home. We also rolled out new tools and strategies to partner organizations to connect disabled workers with stable housing while helping them pay rent, fight eviction, and prevent homelessness.

Last year, I was proud to reauthorize Kevin and Avonte's Law, which expands training for first responders and others giving care to people with autism. And in my recent State of the Union Address, I called on the Congress to increase its support for community living for people with disabilities.

My Administration is also boosting employment opportunities for autistic and other historically marginalized Americans. I was proud to sign an Executive Order advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in the federal workforce, which will help create new jobs for Americans with autism and make space for their voices in the policy-making process.

We are helping State and local governments, employers, and nonprofits tap Federal funds to hire more Americans with disabilities like autism through competitive integrated employment practices. We are cracking down on companies who discriminate on the basis of disability, and we are fighting to end the unfair use of sub-minimum wages. I continue to urge States that have not yet expanded Medicaid coverage under the Affordable Care Act to do the right thing and provide health insurance to those currently locked out of Medicaid support. Health care would otherwise be available to them from the Federal Government. Medicaid expansion would help many Americans with disabilities, including those with autism.

To support students with autism, the Department of Education is ensuring that public schools uphold their obligation to provide free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment to all students. My Administration has also issued new guidance to help schools address the discriminatory use of disciplinary practices that impacts autistic students, whose needs and behaviors are commonly misunderstood.

As we build a more inclusive, just, and equal Nation, we aim to lead by the power of our example. I reestablished the role of Special Advisor on International Disability Rights at the Department of State to prioritize disability rights in our policy discussions with foreign nations. The United States Agency for International Development is advancing disability inclusion as part of its democracy, climate, humanitarian, and peacebuilding activities. And as co-chair of the Global Action on Disability Network and a participant in the Global Disability Summit, the United States continues to promote the equal human rights of people with disabilities worldwide.

America is founded on the idea that all people are created equal and deserve to be treated equally throughout their lives. Today and always, let us strive to live up to this ideal. Let us embrace our diversity; empower each other to reach our full potential; and promote the basic decency, acceptance, and fairness we know is right.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOSEPH R. BIDEN JR., President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 2, 2023, as World Autism Awareness Day. I call upon all Americans to learn more about autism to improve early diagnosis, to learn more about the experiences of autistic people from autistic people, and to build more welcoming and inclusive communities to support people with autism.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this third day of March, in the year of our Lord two thousand twenty-three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and forty-seventh.

JOSEPH R. BIDEN JR.

Originally published by Age of Autism.

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